

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. All claims currently being amended are shown with deleted text struckthrough or double bracketed and new text underlined. Additionally, the status of each claims is indicated in parenthetical expression following the claim number.

Claims 1-13 remain.

Claims 1-5 are being cancelled.

Claims 6, 7, 12, and 13 are being amended.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. – 5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) A method of communication in protocol for a computer network comprising transmitting packets having headers configured to include an indication of whether or not field values and/or lengths within the header thereof have been altered from a pre-established norm.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of communication protocol of claim 6 wherein the headers include protocol extension fields, the values of which may be used to indicate whether or not the field values and/or lengths have been altered.

8. (Original) A method comprising indicating to components of a computer network whether field lengths and/or values of packet headers associated with communication packets transmitted between the components of the network have been altered using protocol extension bits included within the headers.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein a value of 00 for the protocol extension bits indicates that the packet headers have not been altered.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein a value of 01 or 10 for the protocol extension bits indicates that a predetermined change in the content and/or length of the headers has been made.

11. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein a value of 11 for the protocol extension bits indicates that a dynamic change in the content and/or length of the headers is being made.

Cont
A 12. (Currently Amended) The method of communication ~~protocol~~ of claim 7 wherein a value of 11 for the protocol extension bits indicates that a dynamic change in the content and/or length of the header is being made.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of communication ~~protocol~~ of claim 12 wherein different components of the network may use protocol extension bits values of 11 for packet header structures unique to the corresponding component.
